

DOCKET NO.: BELL-0006/99153
Application No.: 09/468,447
Office Action Dated: September 23, 2004

PATENT

REMARKS

The following request for reconsideration is submitted in response to the Office Action issued on September 23, 2004 (Paper No. unknown) in connection with the above-identified application, and is being filed within the three-month shortened statutory period set for filing the response.

Claims 1, 2, 4-14, and 16-35 remain pending in the present application. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4-14, and 16-24, consistent with the following remarks.

The Examiner has now rejected claims 1, 2, 4-14, and 16-35 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Knox (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0103605) in view of Fisher et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0088473). Applicants respectfully traverse the §103(a) rejection.

Independent claim 1 recites a status reporting system (SRS) for automatically reporting updated status of a project to an interested party based on status information stored in a status system. The SRS is communicatively coupled to the status system and has a monitoring device that contacts the status system to determine whether such status system has new status information stored therein and if so obtains such new status information from the status system. An internal mail device receives the obtained status information, then ascertains from the received status information the interested party, then locates an electronic mail address for the interested party, formats the received status information into a piece of electronic mail which includes the received status information and the located electronic mail address, and forwards the piece of electronic mail to the interested party by way of an electronic mail service.

Claim 1 also recites that the SRS further comprises an ID database. The status system tags the status information stored therein with an ID identifying the interested party, and the ID database includes a record having the ID and the electronic mail address for the interested party. Thus, the internal mail device locates the electronic mail address for the interested party from the ID database based on the ID tagged to the received status information. That is, the electronic mail address is derived from the ID database based on the ID from the information, and not vice versa.

Independent claim 13 recites subject matter similar to that of claim 1 but in the form of a method. Independent claim 25 recites subject matter similar to that of claims 1 and 13 but in the form of a computer-readable medium having stored thereon computer-executable instructions implementing the method of claim 13.

In the present invention, a status reporting system interfaces to a status system so as to automatically notify a customer of updates in status without providing the customer with direct access to the status system. Each customer is represented by an ID, the status system tags each piece of status information stored therein with an ID identifying the corresponding customer, and the ID database includes a record having each ID and a corresponding electronic mail address for the customer. Thus, an internal mail device locates the electronic mail address for a customer from the ID database based on the ID tagged to a particular piece of received status information, and sends such status information to such customer at such address.

Significantly, the internal mail device and method as recited in claims 1, 13, and 25 picks up each piece of status information without regard for any particular customer and processes same by sending such piece of information to a particular customer based on an ID

in such piece of information. In contradistinction, such device and method does not select a particular customer and then select each piece of information for that customer.

The Knox reference discloses a system that sends out status information to a client by way of e-mail, phone mail, or the like. In the Knox system, those clients who have requested status notifications are identified first (step 52 of Fig. 2), and for each identified client, a status database is then scanned for status information relating to such client (step 62) and such status information is then delivered to such client in the form of a message (step 64). Thus, the Knox system first searches the database based on the client and then notifies same. In contrast, and again, in the present invention, the database is searched for each new piece of status information and each such new piece of status information is then matched to a customer by way of an ID and delivered to same based on the ID as located in an ID database, where such ID database includes an electronic mail address for the customer and corresponding to the ID. To summarize, then, the present invention as recited in the claims starts with the status information and works to the customer, while the Knox system in contrast starts with the client and works toward the status information.

Nevertheless, in response to arguments previously set forth by Applicants, the Examiner again argues in the present Office Action that paragraph 17 of the Knox reference discloses starting with the status information and working to the customer. However, Applicants again respectfully disagree.

In fact, a fair reading of the Knox reference makes clear that the Knox reference in fact discloses starting from the customer and working to the status information. In particular, and as was summarized above, while the present invention as recited in the claims of the present application requires starting with status information and working toward a

corresponding customer to receive such status information, Knox clearly discloses starting with the customer and working toward the status information to be sent to the customer.

Moreover, a fair reading of the aforementioned paragraph 17 discloses only that Knox “generally” addresses providing status information to a client / customer, and does not provide any specific detail regarding the methods and mechanics employed in so providing such status information. Although the Examiner has chosen to interpret such paragraph 17 as suggesting so providing by starting from the status information and working toward the customer, Applicants respectfully submit that the remainder of the Knox reference makes abundantly clear that in fact the Knox reference contemplates the opposite and does not even consider starting from the status information in the manner set forth in the claims of the present application.

Further, and at any rate, even if the Knox reference were to suggest starting from the status information and working toward the client, such Knox reference discloses no linking mechanism to the status information such as an ID by which the client may be identified from such status information. In fact, the Examiner concedes as much at page 6 of the Office Action. Thus, the Knox reference cannot even be said to suggest or teach starting from the status information and working toward the client in the manner set forth in the claims of the present application.

Nevertheless, the Examiner continues by citing to the Fisher reference, and in particular to the use in such Fisher reference of a flag. In particular, the Fisher reference discloses a status database 16 with status information records therein and an email messenger 15 that periodically checks each record in the database 16 to determine if the status thereof

has changed. As set forth, such determination is made by referring to a flag on the record which is set by a status receiver when updating the record with new status.

Significantly, Applicants respectfully point out that the flag of the Fisher reference is not an ID by which a client may be identified, as is required by the claims of the present application. Instead, such Fisher flag is merely a bit or the like that indicates only whether the record includes updated status. Moreover, and at any rate, the Fisher reference is entirely silent as to how to identify a destination for the updated status of the record, especially inasmuch as Fisher appears to be interested only with identifying the record with the updated status and not especially with how to in fact proceed. Specifically, the Fisher reference at paragraph 0027 discloses only that:

If [any records have an "Updated Status" flag are set], the appropriate status record is fetched 42 from status database 16 and an electronic mail message is composed 43 regarding the new status information. This electronic mail message is then preferably sent 44 to the recipient over wide area network 275.

Thus, like the Knox reference, the Fisher reference also fails to disclose, teach, or even suggest the manner of operation whereby the message with the status information is sent as is recited in the claims of the present application.

To conclude, then, neither the Knox reference nor the Fisher reference discloses, teaches or suggests, alone or combined, an internal mail device that receives status information and that ascertains from the received status information an interested party in the manner recited in claims 1, 13, and 25. Instead, the Knox reference discloses only starting with an interested party and then searching for status information corresponding to same, and the Fisher reference is effectively silent regarding any such procedure. Moreover, neither the Knox reference nor the Fisher reference discloses, teaches or suggests, alone or combined, an

ID database, or that a status system tags status information stored therein with an ID identifying the interested party, or that the ID database includes a record having the ID and the electronic mail address for the interested party, as is also recited in claims 1, 13, and 25.

Thus, neither reference discloses, teaches or suggests, alone or combined, locating the electronic mail address for the interested party from the ID database based on the ID tagged to the received status information, as is further recited in claims 1, 13, and 25. Instead, and again, in the Knox reference, the Knox system selects a customer first, then locates status information therefore, and in the Fisher reference, no specific procedure is set forth.

Accordingly, because the combination of the Knox reference and the Fisher reference does not disclose, suggest, or hint at starting with the status information and working to the customer, as is required by claims 1, 13, and 25 of the present application, Applicants respectfully submit that the Knox reference and Fisher reference cannot be combined to make obvious claims 1, 13, or 25 or any claims depending therefrom, including claims 2, 4-12, 14, 16-24, and 26-35. As a result, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the §103(a) rejection.

DOCKET NO.: BELL-0006/99153

PATENT

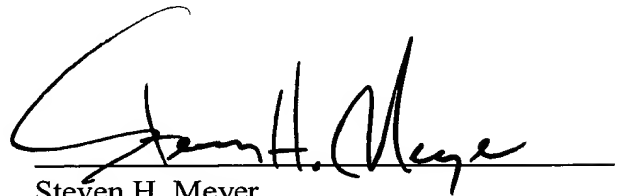
Application No.: 09/468,447

Office Action Dated: September 23, 2004

In view of the foregoing Amendment and Remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application including claims 1, 2, 4-14, and 16-35 is in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: December 17, 2004

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven H. Meyer", is written over a horizontal line.

Steven H. Meyer
Registration No. 37,189

Woodcock Washburn LLP
One Liberty Place - 46th Floor
Philadelphia PA 19103
Telephone: (215) 568-3100
Facsimile: (215) 568-3439